

Gunner's Seat

Welcome, Bradley Fighting Vehicle Crewman 19C, to the Armor Family

As we look to integration of the new 19C military-occupation specialty (MOS) within our formations, I would like to impress upon the force the importance of this monumental addition to the Armor Branch. Our mounted platforms are central to who we are and what we bring to armored combat on the modern battlefield.

Although we have not truly invested in our Bradley Fighting Vehicles (BFVs) to the same degree as the Abrams main battle tank crewmen or reconnaissance and cavalry scouts, the BFV revolutionized mobile protection for our infantry, cavalry, artillery and engineers. The value 19Cs bring to the U.S. Army – in particular to our armored brigade combat teams (ABCTs) – is the ability to standardize training that builds lethal experts on the BFV within the Armored Force.

In recent history we have not invested in the training of our BFV crews like we could have. The Global War on Terrorism and counterinsurgency operations, plus our focus on dismounted and aerial operations, has led to a lack of emphasis on the training experience for BFV crewmen. Implementation of the new 19C MOS aligns the Armor community with Defense Department strategies emphasizing a focus on becoming masters at large-scale combat operations (LSCO). This investment will increase our lethality while addressing the following safety issues across our Armor formations.

Due to the lack of expertise on the BFV, multiple safety incidents have resulted in damage to equipment, injuries to Soldiers and loss of life. In the last three years alone, there have been 16 accidents that have resulted in the deaths of five Soldiers. These incidents and deaths are preventable. Part of how we will address the problem is supported by the III Corps lethality report, which found a direct correlation between BFV proficiency and safety incidents. Command teams have done a great job working to solve many of the issues individually, but as we move forward with the new Bradley crewmember 19C MOS, we can help standardize training focused on improving lethality while reducing risk to Soldiers and their equipment.

Historically 11B infantrymen have been crewmembers for the BFV. Unfortunately this forced them to transition between dismounted and mounted operations with such frequency that some felt there was not the focus on one or the other. As the Army looks to provide our mechanized forces with full dismounted platoons, we look to provide trained experts on the BFV within those same units. This allows the Armor community and our 19Cs to provide the most lethal capability with our dismounted-infantry platoons as part of combined-arms warfare.

We will begin training 19Cs at one-station unit training and continue their road to expertise throughout all Armor professional-military-education courses, continuing through the Maneuver Senior Leader's Course. The designated 19C MOS for the BFV will allow platform expertise. We seek to achieve the technical and tactical platform proficiency necessary to destroy our enemies in mounted warfare.

Ownership, direct emphasis and standardized training dedicated toward platform proficiency are the keys to winning the first battle of the next war. Our ability as a mounted-maneuver force to close with and destroy the enemy cannot be achieved if we only focus on the tank. The creation of the 19C is just a piece of the pie that will build the pride in our Soldiers that results in the appropriate desire to personally invest in becoming an expert on the BFV.

In addition to our safety and lethality issues, we have struggled to maintain operational readiness (OR) of the BFV flight above 85 percent in Fiscal Year 2022. Although that number is a seemingly high percentage, it could be higher if we did not have 111 non-mission-capable BFVs. With these vehicles operational, the Army's OR rating would rise to 92 percent, allowing command teams to train the 28 platoons' worth of BFVs currently sitting in maintenance bays.

With the Armor Branch's expertise in armored warfare, we can concentrate our efforts on manning and training BFV crewmen to enable the U.S. Army to deploy more proficient and lethal ABCTs in support our geographic combatant commands during LSCO. The 19C MOS will bring BFV platform mastery to our ABCTs. An increase in

lethality and readiness, coupled with a decrease in injuries and accidents, are critical to the next war. The future of Armor lethality starts now.

CSM LEVARES J. JACKSON SR.
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army Armor School
(Thunderbolt 7)

Acronym Quick-Scan

ABCT – armored brigade combat team

LSCO – large-scale combat operations

BFV – Bradley Fighting Vehicle

MOS – military-occupation specialty

OR – operational readiness